

Washington State Credentialing Requirements

Mental Health Counselor (Chapter 18.225 RCW, 246-809 WAC)

Type of Credential:

License

DOH Contact:

Customer Service Center - 360-236-4700

Credentialing Requirements	Verification Documents Obtained
A master's or doctoral degree in mental health counseling or a behavioral science master's or doctoral degree in a field relating to mental health counseling.	Official transcript with degree and date posted, received directly from applicant's program. Transcripts not in English must have an official translation.
<p>Behavioral science in a field relating to mental health counseling includes a core of study relating to counseling theory and counseling philosophy.</p> <p>Either a counseling practicum, or a counseling internship, or both, must be included in the core of study. Exclusive use of an internship or practicum used for qualification must have incorporated supervised direct client contact.</p> <p>This core of study must include seven content areas from the entire list in subsections (1) through (17) of this section, five of which must be from content areas in subsections (1) through (8) of this subsection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment/diagnosis• Ethics/law• Counseling individuals• Counseling groups• Counseling couples and families• Developmental psychology (may be child adolescent, adult or life span).• Psychopathology/abnormal psychology• Research and evaluation• Career development counseling• Multicultural concerns• Substance/chemical abuse• Physiological psychology• Organizational psychology• Mental health consultation• Developmentally disabled persons• Abusive relationships• Chronically mentally ill	<p>Subject content form to be completed by applicant.</p> <p>Official graduate school transcripts verify course content.</p> <p>If the course title is not clear, you will be asked to provide a course syllabus.</p>

<p>Minimum of 36 months of full-time counseling or 3000 hours of postgraduate mental health counseling under the supervision of an approved licensed mental health counselor or equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner in an approved setting.</p> <p>At least 100 hours must be in immediate supervision with an approved licensed mental health counselor or equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner.</p> <p>At least 1200 hours must be direct counseling with individuals, couples, groups, or families.</p>	<p>Verification form completed by the supervisor. Supervisor must also make a statement as to his/her qualifications.</p>
<p>Completion of 36 hours of continuing education, six of which is in professional law and ethics.</p>	<p>Applicants must attest that they have met this requirement on the application.</p>
<p>State licensure verification</p>	<p>Applicant lists all states where credentials are or were held, including where applicant has applied but a credential was not granted. A verification form must be completed and submitted by the jurisdiction where the applicant is or was credentialed. Applicant sends form to jurisdiction for completion. The jurisdiction sends completed form directly to the department.</p>
<p>Exam:</p> <p>Either of the following National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) exams are accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Counselor Exam (NCE). • National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Exam (NCMHCE). 	<p>Applicants registered to take the exam directly through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).</p> <p>The National Counselor Examination (NCE) and the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Examination (NCMHCE) are accepted for licensure in Washington State.</p> <p>NBCC Registration form.</p> <p>If you have questions regarding the exam registration process, please contact NBCC at www.nbcc.org.</p> <p>After passing the exam, each applicant must have their exam scores sent directly from NBCC.</p> <p>If you require special accommodations to take the exam, please access the following for the process and forms required http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/Accommodations</p>

<p>Statement about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical and mental health status • lack of impairment due to chemical dependency/substance abuse • history of loss of license, certification or registration • felony convictions • loss or limitations of privileges • disciplinary actions • professional liability claims history 	<p>Applicant must answer personal data questions. An appropriate explanation and required documentation must be sent with positive answers. If there is a positive answer to the professional liability claims history question, the applicant must send an explanation of the nature of the case, data and summary of care given, copies of the original complaint, and the settlement or final disposition. If pending, applicant must indicate status.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Additional Information/Documents Required

- HIV/AIDS training - four hours
- If already taken the NCE or NCMHCE examination, verification of scores need to come from NBCC directly or may be verified by another state in which the applicant was licensed.

Process for Approving/Denying Applications

Credentialing staff review the application and supporting documents to make an initial determination on eligibility. The recommendation is based upon the requirements outlined in RCW 18.225 & WAC 246-809. Credentialing supervisors approve applications that do not have positive answers to personal data questions, have questionable verifying documents, or are otherwise “red flag” applications. Red flag applications are forwarded to the exception application process for determination by the appropriate disciplining authority. An applicant will be formally notified of a denial and has the opportunity for a hearing.

Renewal Requirements

Mental health counselors must renew their license every year on or before their birthday. Thirty-six hours of continuing education, six hours in law and ethics, is due every two years. Mental health counselors are required to submit the appropriate fee, renewal card and an affidavit of compliance with the continuing education requirement.

